

EXHIBIT AD



President Pinto shares message regarding future of DEI at UC



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Dear UC Community,

I write to you today to share some challenging truths about the future of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at the University of Cincinnati. As you are no doubt aware, the federal government has effectively outlawed DEI programs and practices within government entities, including public universities nationwide.

If you haven't already, please take the time to read President Trump's [Executive Order 14173](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-illegal-discrimination-and-restoring-merit-based-opportunity/>) from January 21 as well as the February 14 "Dear Colleague (<https://www.ed.gov/media/document/dear-colleague-letter-sffa-v-harvard-109506.pdf>)" letter from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which calls for the elimination of DEI in higher education.

Taken together, these federal actions are sweeping in their scope, categorical in their conclusions and pressing in their timing. The OCR letter specifically states that we must comply with these new rules by February 28, after which OCR will begin holding noncompliant universities accountable.

In response to these mandates, Provost Kristi Nelson and I spent this week informing our deans and vice presidents of the initial steps we must take to ensure compliance. We also met with Faculty Senate Cabinet to inform them of the implications of these developments. Our message to them — and to you — is this: Given the extent to which our university, like most educational institutions, relies on federal funding to deliver and sustain our core mission, it is untenable to operate as if noncompliance with these directives is an effective option. In addition, Ohio's 136th General Assembly is in the process of fast-tracking [Senate Bill 1](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb1) (<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb1>), which, in its current form, reinforces federal DEI prohibitions.

Given this new landscape, Ohio public and federally supported institutions like ours have little choice but to follow the laws that govern us. Meanwhile, we will continue to work through our state and federal Government Relations channels to encourage legislators to support policies that honor the mission of public higher education, which is so essential for the development of citizens for our democracy.

What does all of this mean for UC as of today?

Our leaders have begun evaluating jobs and duties related to DEI and examining our DEI programming, initiatives and projects to bring all areas into compliance. In addition, we have begun removing references to DEI principles across university websites, social media and collateral materials. This will be a heavy lift, and I am thankful for our university leaders and their teams who grasp what is at stake in this moment. We must approach this process with the thoughtfulness and thoroughness that such complex comprehensive endeavors entail, while always keeping the well-being of the people most affected at the heart of our efforts.

I recognize that these decisions are weighty, and these actions are a departure from decades of established practice within academic communities. I also continue to ask for your patience and understanding as we do the hard work that will be required to unwind many years of DEI efforts under an extremely compressed timeline.

We are committed to meet both our compliance obligations and our mission to provide a supportive learning and working environment where all are welcome, safe and free to be successful. Indeed, there remain many unanswered questions, and we are working diligently to arrive at answers. As we move forward, we will share updates as information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Neville G Pinto

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